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ABSTRACT

This handbook for teachers of kindergarten through grade twelve was developed to assist those who administer or construct tests. The publication was written in response to a Montgomery County Public Schools citizens' advisory committee recommendation that reflected concern about the need to improve students' test-taking skills. The handbook discusses test strategies for teachers, including creation of an environment conducive to administering standardized tests and to construction and use of teacher-made tests. The second part of the handbook discusses strategies for helping students to become test-wise. An annotated bibliography contains instructional resources for teachers, resources for students, professional resources, and videotapes. (DWH)

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Teaching Students to be Testwise

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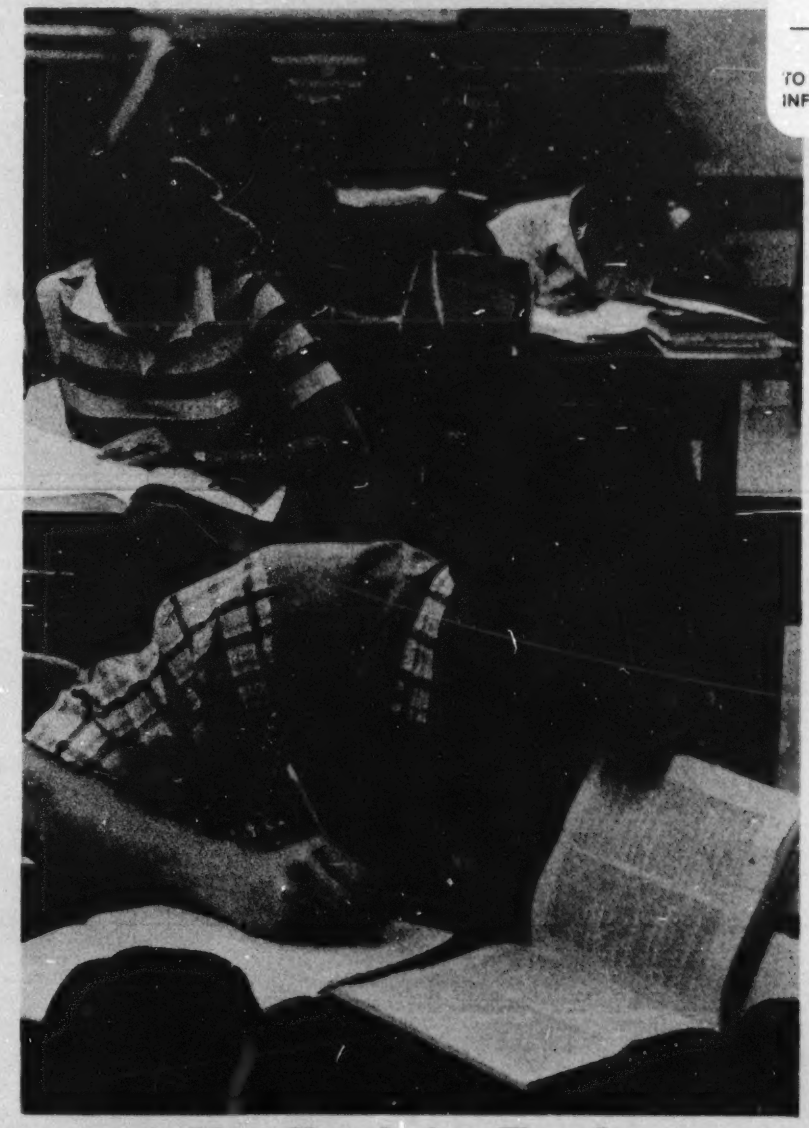

A Handbook for Teachers Who Administer or Construct Tests

Grades K-12

TM 820 595

Teaching Students to be Testwise

A Handbook for Teachers
Who Administer or Construct Tests

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1982

Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

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Introduction

The instructional activities contained in this publication were developed in response to a Montgomery County Public Schools citizens' advisory committee recommendation that reflected concern about the need to improve students' test-taking skills. The ideas and suggestions reflect the consolidation of the 1975 MCPS publications *Helping Students Do Better on Tests: Sections I and II.*

The materials include suggestions for the construction of teacher-made tests (multiple choice, alternate response, matching, completion, essay, etc.), and the administration of standardized tests. Also included is an annotated bibliography listing instructional materials that teachers may use as students practice and gain familiarity with standardized tests. These materials should be maintained in the media center for student use. Professional materials are also suggested.

Current research and literature suggest that learning how to take tests improves students' performance. Although most Montgomery County Public School students generally do well on tests, some do not. This handbook should be used by all teachers who construct and/or administer teacher-made or standardized tests.

Teaching Students To Be Testwise

I. Test Strategies for Teachers

A. Creation of an Environment Conducive to Testing

Teachers should:

1. Familiarize themselves with the test manual, paying close attention to the directions
2. Keep certain characteristics of their students in mind such as learning styles, ability levels, and personalities
3. Provide a proper physical environment
4. Discourage interruptions
5. Inform students of the test's purpose, the administration procedures, and how the score affects grades
6. Make certain that students understand test directions
7. Be sensitive to students who are ill or become so before or during the testing session

B. Construction of Teacher-made Tests

1. Explanation of test types

a) **Multiple Choice** — Multiple choice tests deal not only with facts, dates, places, names, and the connections among them but also with supporting passages and supplementary data which need to be carefully read by students. All cognitive ability levels except for creativity can be tested with this type of item. Questions are limited to those for which the test constructor can find logical "wrong" answers, or distracters, attractive enough to tempt the less knowledgeable student to choose them.

b) **Alternate Response** — Alternate response tests consist of statements to which the student is asked to respond from among two answer choices. Usually these responses take the form of true-false. Students often find such test items tricky, and test-makers are advised to limit the use of this type of item to the assessment of factual information.

c) **Matching** — Matching tests comprise two columns of items which must be paired. The student's task is to identify the relationship between the two columns. These items measure the primarily recognition of words, names, terms, dates, numbers, definitions, and specific applications.

d) **Completion** — Completion tests require the student to fill in blanks of partially completed statements. These tests assess the student's ability to identify or recall complete or technical information in context.

e) **Essay** — Essay exams allow the teacher to examine the student's ability to reason logically, express ideas clearly, and organize replies systematically. Unlike the objective test, which usually emphasizes the recognition of information, the essay exam focuses on "recall" skills at a higher cognitive level. The use of these "higher level skills" involves the following factors: (1) knowledge of subject matter, key vocabulary, key concepts; (2) ability to apply basic English composition skills; (3) understanding of what test directions ask the student to do; and (4) practice in higher level skills such as analyses, synthesis, and evaluation.

2. Hierarchy of skill levels and test directions

Often students lament, "But I didn't know what the teacher wanted." Clear directions are important. In preparing test directions, teachers need to consider the ability level essential to answer each question. The various directions may be organized into five groups, each requiring special abilities and practice.

Hierarchy of Skill Level for Essay Test Directions

Explanation of Directions	Ability Needed	Appropriate Practice
Name, list, mention, give, identify. List in order what is requested. No sentences are necessary.	Simple recall Memorize key concepts.	Memorize key vocabulary.
State. Describe, define, or point out briefly. Simple lists, outlines, or single sentences are adequate.		
Give the principle of. State the law or rule called for. No examples are required.		
Outline. Arrange information in outline form.	Complex recall	Organize events according to cause and effect in chronological order.
Trace. Give events in the order in which they occurred. Use only major points with transitional phrases to show cause and effect relationships.		
Summarize, give the significance of. Present both major points and major accepted conclusions. Opinions are not required. Apply principles and concepts stressed in class.		

3. General test construction guidelines

   Items should:

   a) Be congruent with the course's instructional/performance objectives
   b) Avoid questions about unimportant or trivial information
   c) Tap information different from all other items. The knowledge required to answer one item should not be prerequisite for answering other items.
   d) Have only one correct answer
   e) Be clear and concise, using vocabulary familiar to students. The examinee should not be forced to guess the intent of the test writer.
   f) Avoid statements and questions which express opinions
   g) Be straight forward. There should be no attempt to trick the students.
   h) Avoid trigger words which would signal correct answers
   i) Generate correct answers which fall into a random pattern of occurrence

4. Guidelines for construction of specific types of tests

   a) Multiple choice items should:
      (1) Present a single definite problem
      (2) Have answer choices approximately the same in length
      (3) Have answer choices that use similar technical language
      (4) Avoid answer choices that are synonyms or antonyms to the item stem

(5) Place answer choices in a logical/sequential order
(6) Have answer choices parallel in form and grammatically consistent with the stem
(7) Avoid answer choices that overlap
(8) Avoid the use of key or similar key words from the stem in the answer choice

b) Alternate response items should:
(1) Use grammatically simple sentences
(2) Avoid the use of confusing terms such as always, no, never, everyone, all, generally, usually, sometimes, and often
(3) Avoid statements which contain false phrases

c) Matching tests should:
(1) Provide more answer choices than items
(2) Avoid excessively long lists of items
(3) List items in sequential order, if possible
(4) Have items and answer choices approximately the same length
(5) Assure that items within each column are related

d) Completion or short-answer items should:
(1) Avoid multiple omissions
(2) Avoid blanks at the beginning of statements
(3) Have blanks equal in length
(4) Give enough information to elicit a specific brief response
(5) Avoid grammatical clues or trigger words such as verb tense, singular and plural pronouns, and modifiers

e) Essay tests should:
(1) Avoid vague questions. Specify for students what the answer is to include.
(2) Offer question options of equal difficulty
(3) Provide several questions
(4) Provide specific information to students concerning the point value of each question

(5) Be evaluated along the following guidelines:

(a) Mastery of content
Was the student able to answer the question? Is there an obvious grasp of the meaning of the major issues, facts, etc.? Is key vocabulary used properly?

(b) Level of thought process used
Did the student go beyond a mere recital of the facts? Did he/she progress up the "skill ladder" when required?

(c) Quality of presentation
Did the student generally adhere to the rules of usage, grammar, punctuation, spelling style, and format?

(d) Rate of completion
Did the student apportion the time available so that he/she was able to attempt all items?

(e) Alternate test forms
Providing alternate tests for different ability levels will offer a better assessment of student performance.

(f) Answer outline
Outlining expected answers prior to test administration aids in the grading process.

(g) Grading order
Scoring all answers to one question before proceeding to the next question eliminates the "halo" effect.

(h) Feedback
Giving the students immediate feedback concerning test performance allows the test to become an instructional tool.

II. Strategies for Helping Students To Become Testwise

A. General Strategies for Objective Tests

1. Pacing strategies; planning use of time
When rate of progress through a test as well as subject mastery are significant factors in standardized tests and some teacher-made tests, students should know (a) the number of items on the test; (b) the total time available for these items; and (c) whether points are to be deducted for incorrect answers. Regardless of whether or not time is a significant component of the test, students will benefit from managing their time wisely.

2. The "too difficult" test
Students should be made aware that some standardized tests are designed to be above their ability level. Even if the student feels that the test is too difficult, he/she should attempt to answer systematically all items possible. He/she should then be encouraged to go back and try to do the marked items *unless* the test-maker penalizes for guessing.

3. The "seemingly easy" test
Occasionally, tests are viewed as being easy; yet the students do not score unusually high. One reason for this pacing error is that the students fail to recognize the varying difficulty levels of the subtests within a test. Another reason is that the students take short cuts. For example, on reading comprehension tests, it is easy for students to answer factual questions without reading the selection. Reading test directions carefully will help alleviate these problems.

4. Marking mechanics
To save time and eliminate marking errors, students should be directed to keep the answer sheet and test booklet together and to keep the answer sheet closest to the writing hand.

5. Guessing strategies
If there is no penalty for guessing, students may make logical guesses to improve their scores by looking for clues in context or faulty test construction.

Listening carefully to classroom instruction will often provide clues to a teacher's phraseology which will later appear on the test. Teachers often include all major issues when developing tests. Students should be encouraged to examine their notes before the test in order to predict possible test questions. Also, if a single event, person, or date has been the correct answer on several previous items, the correct answer for the hard-to-solve item will not usually reflect the same information.

In the case of criterion-referenced tests, students should be discouraged from guessing, because it decreases the effectiveness of the test as a learning tool.

6. Ability to follow directions accurately
Regardless of grade taught, teachers know that there are always a few students who will misunderstand the directions or inadvertently fail to follow them. The teacher does not always know that a certain student will be unable to follow a particular set of directions, and the difficulty may not be detected until the tests are corrected. The single most common error that students should be forewarned against is slipping back into old habits formed in classroom practice. Students will circle or put single lines through answer spaces for machine-scored tests. Others switch from special pencils to ball point pens. Still others "get one place off," and lose credit for entire sections. Advise students to request clarification of the directions when necessary.

7. Ability to read and understand each item

Failure to read each item accurately accounts for many student errors. Following are some item "traps" and reminders for avoiding them:

a) **Find key words.** Fluent readers, who tend to skim rapidly through prose material as well as test material, may skip over key words in test items. See the following example:

> Scout Troops A and B are taking part in a "walkathon" benefit. It is known that Troop A can hike 20 miles in about 8 hours. Troop B can hike 20 miles in about 4 hours. On the day of the walkathon, Troop A quits after about 4 hours. Troop B starts hiking where they left off. How many hours does it take Troop B to finish the total 25-mile hike?
>
> (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) (4) 5

Some students, failing to read carefully, would figure that the hike might be the "20 miles" long mentioned earlier, and come up with answer (2). Others might think both troops walked the entire distance and choose answer (4). "Starts hiking," are the key words here.

b) **Distinguish between similar appearing words.** Students should be informed that well-constructed test items always contain a few attractive wrong answers. In problems involving computation, these take the form of logical errors; in verbal items, these appear in the form of very similar words. See the following example: (Fill in the blank.)

> The policewoman received a commendation for her _____ work in rescuing the victims of Saturday's assault.
>
> *(1) mendacious
> *(2) meretricious
> *(3) miraculous
> *(4) meritorious

c) **Watch out for negatives and double negatives.** Direct students to look for negatives both in general directions and in the items themselves. Statements such as the three below tend to confuse students who have not practiced the particular mode of answering questions.

> Put a line through the sentence which is incorrect.
> All of the answers are correct except . . .
> Circle any punctuation mark which should be omitted.

Use of "not" and negative prefixes within items may also be confusing as in this true-false item:

> A not atypical shape of the gentian flower in the East is that of a bell.

Students should be shown how to cancel double negatives to get meaning out of certain test items. Underlining the double negative helps avoid confusion.

d) **Ignore irrelevant material.** Knowing what to ignore in responding to items is a two-step procedure. First, the test-taker should focus on the command or question ending the item. See what it asks him/her to do. Very often excess verbiage "pads" the body of the item, making it more true to life, but also making it confusing to the unwary. Focusing on the command enables the test-taker to weed out unnecessary information as he/she reads. If there are many such complex items, it might be a good idea to start reading with the actual command. See the following example:

> Johnny was 50 inches tall and weighed 72 pounds at the age of nine. At ten, he was 53 inches tall; and by eleven, he had reached 56 inches and weighed 80 pounds. By the end of seventh grade (13 years old), he weighed 95 pounds and was 65 inches tall. What was his average gain in inches between his tenth and thirteenth year?
>
> *(1) 1.0 (2) 2.0 *(3) 4.0 (4) 5.0

Only three pieces of information are needed from the entire paragraph. Because of the many irrelevant bits, however, the test taker may be either confused or at least slowed in his/her progress through the test. Therefore, accuracy might be increased if the test taker first reads the command at the end of the item, searches the item for the necessary information, then proceeds to answer the question.

e) **Use built-in clues.** In certain poorly constructed tests, answers may be incorrect only because they are wrong grammatically or because they constitute faulty test construction. See the following examples of poor test items:

That boats constructed of wood and reed could successfully navigate between South America and Polynesia was demonstrated by an:

*(1) navigator
*(2) geographer
*(3) anthropologist
*(4) mariner

Match Column A with Column B.

Column A	Column B
1. Dwight D. Eisenhower	( ) Year Korean armistice was signed
2. 54,000	( ) Elected president in 1952
3. North Korea	( ) Country controlled by communists
4. 1953	( ) Statement made by General Douglas MacArthur
5. "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away."	( ) Number of U.S. servicemen killed in Korea

8. Ability to eliminate wrong answers systematically

Students can eliminate wrong answers by reducing the total number of alternatives that need to be considered. The following techniques are suggested:

a) **Search for an answer in the same form as the question.** If the question asks for "feet," eliminate an answer with inches; if it asks for "percent of time," don't give actual time.

b) **Read each choice before marking your answer.**

c) **Fit each choice into the blank in turn, to find the phrase that best completes the sentence.** Can any choice be eliminated on the basis of violation of a part of speech, a grammar rule, or common sense? See the following example: (Fill in the blank.)

_____, my grandmother gave me the family pearls.

*(1) At the age of eighteen
*(2) At eighteen
*(3) When I was eighteen
*(4) At eighteen years of age

B. Strategies for Specific Types of Objective Tests

1. Multiple choice

Instruct the students that

a) The question and the answer should be in grammatical agreement.

What happened to the Library of Congress in 1814?
*(1) It burned when the capitol burned.
*(2) It contains millions of books.
*(3) A new wing will be added.
*(4) It provides "talking books" for the blind.

Choice "1" is correct because it is the only one which contains a past tense verb.

b) Unusually long or short alternatives indicate the correct answer.

What is the function of the heart?
*(1) Gets rid of waste products via the alimentary canal
*(2) Reabsorbs water in order to keep the blood fluid
*(3) Circulates blood
*(4) Protects the body against mechanical shocks

c) The question and the correct alternative should use similar technical language.

What is vascular cambium?
*(1) A large tube in the body
*(2) A ring of meristematic cells that forms between the bark and wood of a tree during the first growing season
*(3) A new energy resource
*(4) The main tissue in plant roots

d) Synonymous answers cannot be correct. Sybil can be described as having a(n) _____ personality.
*(1) Multiple
*(2) Apprehensive
*(3) Anxious
*(4) Nervous

e) When there are answers with opposite meanings, one of them will most likely be correct.

Choose the answer that means either the same or about the same as the *italicized* word.

The *idle* workers
*(1) Happy
*(2) Hard working
*(3) Inactive
*(4) Angry

f) There are four major types of questions used on objective tests which require different kinds of information.

Main idea items are generally worded as follows:
The best name of this story would be . . . .
The chief topic discussed is . . . .
The passage is mainly about . . . .
The main idea of this selection may be expressed . . . .
Both main points are related to the idea that . . . .

Detail items are stated somewhere in the article. Examples of this type are:
The author or article states that . . . .
According to the article, which of the following is correct?

Context items ask about the meaning of a particular term in light of the selection.

Inference items range from implied meaning to author's intent and are generally worded as follows:
The chief purpose of this selection is to . . . .
The writer implies that . . . .
The tone of the passage is . . . .
This story suggests . . . .
It can be inferred that . . . .

g) All answer choices should be examined before selecting the correct answer.

2. Alternate response

Instruct the students that

a) It is difficult to make a statement which everyone can agree on. Therefore, statements containing words such as no, none of, everyone, all, always, generally, usually, sometimes, may, and often should be examined carefully. These terms are misleading.

For example:

All the states signed the Declaration of Independence.
The IRS has never rejected a correctly filed claim.
Some plants require sunlight.
College graduates usually have good jobs.

b) If part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false.

Water expands when it is frozen because the number of molecules increases. ("because" clause makes it false.)

3. Matching

The student should be instructed to:

a) Determine the relationship between the columns prior to marking the answers. Read the left hand column, then the right hand column.

b) Place a check beside an answer as it is used unless directed to use the answers more than once.

4. Completion/short answer

Direct the student to:

a) Fill in the blanks with partial answers or his/her own words when unable to recall complete or technical answers.

b) Look for both grammatical and visual clues. The number of blank spaces as well as their length will be a guide in answering the question.

Name the colors of the American flag.

*(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

(The blanks indicate there are three colors.)

C. Strategies for Essay Tests

1. Developing an overall strategy

An overall strategy is of first importance in doing well on essay tests, as many procedural decisions are left up to the student. Following are three suggestions for developing profitable strategies:

a) **Glance (skim) over entire test.** This skimming has a two-fold purpose: (1) to locate key words and phrases which will be helpful in answering questions, and (2) to see whether there are objective ways (such as the granting of a certain number of points) to determine the best use of the time available.

b) **Apportion time to the various items.** If different numbers of points are assigned to certain questions, the student should devote an appropriate portion of time to each item. In some cases, students may wish to start with those items with the biggest payoff. If the same number of points is to be given for all items, it may be helpful to start with those on which the student expects to do well. In other cases, it makes sense to start with items with related content, as it is often easier to develop logical trains of thought for such items.

c) **Prepare a brief outline for each question.** Jotting down brief outlines and reading them over before starting to write will help give some logical organization to the answers. Key words should be underlined as a reminder to include specific ideas or examples.

The outline must abstract the crucial elements of the question and use explicit, short phrases. No elaborate outlining should be attempted.

2. Writing out the answer

The following procedures should help the student maximize his/her chances of writing a good essay:

a) **Apportion time in the writing of the individual item.** Approximately one-third of the time spent on a single essay item should be set aside for setting up an outline and for final proofreading of the essay. For instance, if about 15 minutes are to be spent in outlining, and about two in checking the final essay, then 34 minutes should be spent on writing the essay.

b) **Understand and take advantage of the directions.** If broad commands such as "Discuss. . ." or "Give your opinion of. . ." are used, the student has latitude in expressing himself/herself. All students should be able to write something. If the instructions are limiting, such as "List. . ." or "Outline. . .", the student should use short, specific phrases. It is a waste of time to write out elaborate complete sentences when not required.

c) **Carry over outline system into body of complete answer.**

d) **Begin essay with a restatement of the question.** Beginning the essay with a brief restatement of the question will indicate to the reader that the student understands what is to be done and it also provides a good topic sentence.

e) **Write concise sentences and paragraphs in ink.**

f) **Use subject matter vocabulary.**

g) **Emphasize points stressed by the teacher.**

h) **Conclude with summary statement.**

i) **Proofread the essay for such things as gross errors, awkward usage.**

Instructional Resources for Teachers

Achieve. (3-8) Instructo/McGraw-Hill, 1977. Instructional Packages $6.95 each (as of Fall 1981)

Designed to help eliminate anxiety for students when taking standardized tests, these two programs, one for basic math skills and one for basic language arts skills, are available for Grades 3 through 8. The student booklet contains pretests, practice exercises, and timed tests. Each package includes 10 students booklets, 2 spirit master answer sheets, an answer stencil, and a teaching guide.

Building Test-Taking Skills in Language Arts. Instructo/McGraw-Hill, 1977. *Building Test-Taking Skills in Math.* (3-8) Spirit Master Books $5.95 each (as of Fall 1981)

These books of spirit masters, available for Grades 3 through 8, use formats found on standardized tests to provide practice test-taking exercises. They also include answer sheets and a teaching guide.

EAS Test-Taking Skills Kit. (4-8) Evaluation and Assessment Service, Inc., 1981. Kit $89.95 (as of Fall 1981)

The *EAS Test-Taking Skills Kit* is designed to help students prepare for standardized tests. The exercises and practice tests are presented in formats which resemble standardized tests. Thus students are able to work on materials and under conditions as close to the actual test situations as possible. The kit includes student activity booklets, teacher guide, answer sheets, answer key, and student questionnaires.

Let's Talk About the SAT (film) (10-12) College Board Film Library, 1976. 15 minutes, color (MCPS Film No. 6958)

This film was prepared as a public service message by the College Entrance Examination Board to introduce high school students to the SAT. It answers most commonly asked questions with mainly student reactions and responses from guidance counselors and college deans of admission.

Life Skills; Tests of Functional Competencies in Reading and Math. (7-9) The Riverside Publishing Co., 1980.

This is an actual test developed to measure reading and math skills for everyday situations. The reading section includes locating references, understanding forms, obtaining information, and following directions. The math section contains computing prices; estimating costs; identifying measurements; interpreting graphs; and working with percentage, interest, and fractions. The test is available in two forms and takes approximately 40 minutes.

Mini Tests. (K-12) Educational Solutions, Inc., 1976, 1979. 16-44 spirit masters, 1 answer key booklet, 1 teacher manual. $24.20 to $39.60 each level (as of Fall 1981)

Each mini test program is designed to help students prepare for specific standardized reading achievement tests, and each is available in three series. The mini test to be used with the California Achievement Test in reading offers six levels within the vocabulary-comprehension series, one level in the picture/reading skills series (beginner), and one level in the word analysis-story completion series (elementary). The mini tests are five to ten minutes in length. The kit for each level includes starter tests which emphasize general test-taking skills; practice tests which emphasize specific test-taking skills; and notes for the teacher with the answer key and suggestions for teaching necessary skills. Four different levels of Add-a-Kits are also available which cover the short sections of the CAT.

Real Life Reading Skills. (7-12) Scholastic Book Services, 1977. 16 transparencies. 20 workbooks. Teacher's Guide $59.50 (as of Fall 1981)

This program is designed to help junior and senior high school students who are considered functionally illiterate. It includes practice exercises on reading labels; following directions; filling out forms and applications; using reference material; reading newspapers; and developing consumer skills. (*Approved BATAB No. 844461962*)

Scope Visuals 25; Improving Test Scores. (4-12) Scholastic Book Services, 1976.

This booklet contains transparencies and spirit masters developed for use with junior and senior high students who are reading at fourth- to sixth-grade reading levels. It is intended to help them develop test-taking techniques for standardized tests. The transparencies introduce vocabulary, reading, logical thinking, spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, reference, and map skills. The spirit masters provide follow-up activities to reinforce each particular skill. (*Approved BATAB No. 844535796*)

Scoring High on the CAT. (1-8) Random House, 1981. Set $15.57 (as of Fall 1981)

Scoring High on the CAT is designed to prepare students for the California Achievement Tests. The program provides instruction and practice in reading, language, mathematics, and reference skills tested on the California Achievement Test. *Scoring High* also familiarizes students with test format, directions, and teachers' test-taking strategies that are required for success on the California Achievement Test.

Test-Taking Skills: Effective Study Techniques. (7-12) Center for Humanities, 1977. 2 slide carousels, 2 phonodiscs, 2 cassettes, teacher's guide. $159.50 (as of Fall 1981)

This kit is designed to help students study for and take tests. Part 1 gives students techniques for predicting essay questions by studying their notes, and it gives them specific pacing strategies for taking the exam. Part 2 suggests that students can also predict objective test items by studying their notes and devising practice questions. It discusses pacing and guessing strategies for taking objective tests. (*Approved BATAB No. 843784458*)

Test-Taking Skills: How To Succeed on Standardized Examinations. (9-12) Center for Humanities, 1978. 2 slide carousels, 2 phonodiscs, 2 cassettes, teacher's guide. $159.50 (as of Fall 1981)

This kit focuses on practical and psychological preparations for taking standardized tests, with special emphasis on the SAT. Sample questions are examined to illustrate various strategies for improving scores. (*Approved BATAB No. 844010162*)

Test-Taking Techniques. (7-College) Educational Activities, 1980. 4 cassettes, teacher's guide, 10 Activity Books. No. AKC 329 $47.00 (as of Fall 1981)

This kit teaches students how to prepare for tests by using lecture and textbook notes to study. It emphasizes the skill of being able to predict possible test questions. (*Previews*, November 1980, p. 11)

Resources for Students

Bobrow, Jerry, and Covino, William A. *Cliffs Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test Preparation Guide* and *Cliffs Scholastic Aptitude Test Preparation Guide.* (10-12) Lincoln, Nebraska: Cliffs Notes Incorporated, 1979.

These two guides are intended to be precise and compact; and with that purpose in mind, they set out to help the student prepare for the PSAT and SAT. They provide an analysis of the different exam areas and two full length tests.

Brownstein, Samuel C., and Weiner, Mitchel. *Barron's How To Prepare for College Entrance Examinations.* New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1975.

This handbook provides the student with thorough information to prepare for the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and Achievement tests. It offers both self-paced study programs with hundreds of exercises and several practice tests with answers. (Can be found in most high school career centers and many bookstores.)

Feder, Bernard. *The Complete Guide to Taking Tests.* (9-Adult) Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979.

Feder tries to help students analyze different types of tests and use them to their best advantage. He gives exam techniques which include effective ways to study, common mistakes to avoid, test flaws or clues to be aware of, guessing strategies to employ, and ways to unravel complex directions. Also, he provides detailed examples of types of questions found on major standardized tests. (*Approved BATAB No. 131607472*)

Gruber, Edward C., and Bramson, Morris. *Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for College Entrance.* New York: Monarch Press, 1976.

This is similar to Barron's *How To Prepare for College Entrance Examinations.* (May be found in high school career education centers.)

Millman, Jason, and Pauk, Walter. *How To Take Tests.* (9-12) New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.

The authors concentrate on test-taking skills for both standardized and teacher-made tests. They emphasize the importance of good study skills and focus on specific test-taking techniques. Sections are also included on types of test questions and tests of selected abilities.

Taking the SAT. Princeton, N. J.: College Entrance Examination Board, 1981.

This booklet includes descriptions of the SAT and TSWE, an explanation of the different types of questions used, and suggestions on answering the questions. It also has a brief sample test and answer sheet. (Supplied free to secondary schools for students who register for the SAT, or can be purchased from College Board Publication Orders, Box 2815, Princeton, N. J. 08541)

Weigand, George. *How To Succeed in High School and Score High on College Entrance Examinations.* (9-12) New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1974.

This book is intended for the student who would like to improve his/her performance in high school. It gives techniques for managing time wisely, developing good study habits, studying for specific subjects, and taking tests and examinations.

The items on the following lists are all similar to those in *Barron's How To Prepare for College Entrance Examinations.* They can be found in most high school career education centers and many bookstores.

Arco Publishing Company, Inc.

Arco Scholarship Exam Series (10-12)

Scholastic Aptitude Tests
College Board Achievement Tests
American College Testing Program Exams
College Entrance Tests
The College Boards Examination
PSAT — NMSQT

Barron's Educational Series, Inc. (10-12)

Barron's How To Prepare for

- *the PSAT — NMSQT*
- *the American College Testing Program*
- *the New High School Equivalency Exam*
- *the Test of English as a Foreign Language*
- *College Board Achievement Tests* (separate one for specific subjects)
- *College Advanced Placement Examinations in . . .* (specific subjects)

Professional Resources

California Achievement Tests; Class Management Guide (Forms C and D, Levels 10-19). Monterey, California: CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1978.

The purpose of this guide is to help the classroom teacher interpret and use the results of the *California Achievement Tests, Forms C and D.* The first section discusses the development of the tests, including the rationale for content and format. The second section covers the test content and outlines the objectives covered in each area and the levels at which they are measured. The third section explains how to interpret the test results. Section four suggests ways that the CAT C and D can be used in the classroom. Section five includes supplemental instructional activities for students which are matched to the CAT objectives. (This is a valuable resource, and at least one copy has been distributed to each school.)

Cluff, Robert B., and Smith, Charles W. *Humanizing the Testing Aspect of Evaluation*, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, (ED 076 498). Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, n.d.

This paper presents guidelines for teachers for effective preparation and presentation of teacher-made tests. It outlines some useful tools such as teacher file cards of items covered in class and clearly defined course objectives.

Erickson, Michael E. "Test Sophistication: An Important Consideration," *Journal of Reading*, 16, No. 2 (November 1972), 140-144, (EJ 070 710)

Erickson gives instructions on how to improve student test-taking skills, suggesting that students do poorly on standardized tests because of a deficiency in such skills. He identifies four basic item types found on standardized reading tests which the student should be trained to recognize and know how to answer.

Ford, Valeria A. *Everything You Wanted To Know About Test-Wiseness*. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, (ED 093 912). Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1973.

The purpose of this paper is to elaborate on the term "test-wiseness." It outlines specific techniques that students should be taught to employ when taking a test and provides empirical research to support the use of such techniques. Finally, it presents a rationale for a test-wiseness learning program in a school and possible procedures to implement the program.

Gifford, C. S., and Fluitt, J. L. "Test-Taking Skills and Test-Wiseness," *Clearing House*, 52 (October 1978), 53-55.

After surveying current literature, Gifford and Fluitt concluded that test-taking skills and test-wiseness do influence test performance; and they can be learned. An outline taken from an existing program is given to assist those who wish to implement curricular programs in test-taking skills.

Montgomery County Public Schools, Department of Educational Accountability. *Accountability Testing Handbook*. Rockville, Md.: MCPS, 1980.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize principals and teachers with the California Achievement Tests, the standardized test mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education. The first part describes the test and gives examples of question formats. The second part presents reports that are distributed to the schools with an explanation of the data on the reports and suggestions to use it accurately. The final part presents commonly used technical testing terms with definitions. Copies may be found in the school principal's office.

Shuller, Stephen M. *A Large-Scale Assessment of an Instructional Program To Improve Test-Wiseness in Elementary School Students*. New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1979. (ED 189 143)

This is an assessment of the effectiveness of Mini Tests, an instructional program developed by Educational Solutions, Inc. Data collected in the New York City Public Schools (Grades 2-9) during 1974-76 indicated that schools purchasing the program made statistically significant gains in the number of students scoring on grade level.

Staff Report on the Federal Trade Commission Investigation of Coaching for Standardized Admission Tests. Boston: Regional Office of the Federal Trade Commission, 1981.

The Boston Regional Office of the Federal Trade Commission conducted an investigation to determine whether commercial coaching schools were making deceptive claims as to their effectiveness in raising students scores on the SAT. The staff evaluated two commercial schools, reviewed current research, and concluded that coaching does significantly improve SAT scores. When they discovered that none of the introductory SAT materials provided to students by the ETS and College Board mentioned the benefits of coaching, they requested that appropriate changes be made. The findings of this report raised questions concerning what exactly the SAT measures, how coaching improves scores, and what this conclusion means for the less affluent.

Taylor, James S. "Improve Your Classroom Testing Skills." *Clearing House*, 50 (May 1977), 381-5
This article provides some excellent guidelines for constructing teacher-made tests. It not only mentions reliability and validity factors but gives suggestions for constructing specific types of test items. In the last section, it discusses methods for analyzing test results.

Videotapes

The Test *8 minutes*
Tests, Tests, Tests *13 minutes*

AIT (Agency for Instructional TV)
Box A
Bloomington, Indiana 47402

This videotape series discusses the importance of standardized tests and explores positive ways to prepare students for test taking. It explains the difference between aptitude and achievement tests and between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests; and it tells how standardized tests are made and what they do.